



BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



Chief Strachan's Weekly Update

Things always get a little weird when fall really hits and the weather turns markedly colder. If you add in the election season, it likely made it worse. Last Wednesday a person reported just having departed a bank with \$500 in cash. The cash was laying on the passenger seat, and when they stopped for the traffic light, a suspect rode up on a bicycle and demanded the cash. The suspect attempted to open the car door, which was locked, and then started hitting the window. The victim backed up away from the suspect, who tried to follow on his bike and continue to hit the window. The victim then drove through the red light and went directly to our headquarters front desk. A Kitsap County Sheriff's Deputy was in the area and assisted us in searching for the suspect, who was spotted on Veneta Avenue and then (predictably) fled from our officers. He was caught hiding in the yard of the house nearby, and he went to jail for Attempted Robbery with \$100,000 bail.

Sgt. Aaron Elton reported last week that he, Corporal Duke Roessel and Officer Trevor Donnelly were dispatched to an East Bremerton grocery store to handle a domestic assault. The victim was outside with a cut to her eye, and she said she and her partner went to pick up ingredients for lasagna...after having had several drinks earlier in the evening. The alcohol was probably the bad decision in this particular local episode of "Top Chef". There was an argument at the store, and the victim was punched in the face. The partner got into a passing car, and officers located the car and suspect nearby. There would be no lasagna tonight, and the suspect was likely disappointed to learn that it was Bologna Night at the jail.

Wednesday, officers responded to an attempted suicide in West Bremerton, where a man was holding a knife to his throat and threatening to kill himself. Officer Joe Corey arrived first, and was quickly joined by Officer Alan McComas and Officer Kenny Davis. Officers did a great job of quietly speaking to the man, and eventually were able to convince him to drop the knife and go to the hospital.

Some might call it nosy neighbors, but they saved a life this week. A caller from a neighborhood in West Bremerton became concerned for an elderly woman whom they had not seen in a few days. They knocked at her door, but there was no answer. Corporal J.D. Miller arrived and, with the assistance of Bremerton Fire, (as well as a few well-placed kicks to the door), entry was made to the house. The woman was found inside, barely breathing. She was quickly taken to the hospital and we are told she is recovering.

For our last newsletter, I regaled you with the story of a man with chronic and untreated mental illness who creates disorder all over town, but who is not "bad" enough to be involuntarily placed in a mental health facility under our state law,

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and who is too mentally ill to be charged with a crime. Here is his list this week: Friday night, officers dealt with him twice when he was acting as if he was pointing a gun at patrons of a bar, and then he walked across the Manette Bridge yelling at cars and people. He was also scratching at his face. Saturday he was reported to have "a bunch of cutlery" in his hands, which turned out to be a metal can opener that he pointed at people. It took five officers to surround him and keep him from going into the street into traffic. He refused to go for evaluation voluntarily, and the case workers decided there was nothing they could do so he was released. He told officers he "was no longer taking his medications" because he did not need them. Tuesday, he was charging at cars on Washington Avenue and waving a stick. Later that day, his mother wanted him taken from his home so he could be admitted to a hospital. Several officers tried to find him at home, but there was no answer. He was jailed once this week for disorderly conduct, but was not charged and has been released again. Unless and until our state legislature decides to really do something about the gaps in our mental health system, we will keep doing this over and over.

A different person who is well-known to officers [attacked and assaulted Officer Spencer Berntsen on Wednesday](#). It is a reflection of Spencer's commitment and dedication that he was back at work the next day. Ambushes and assaults on officers are up nationwide, and we continue to lose the "message war" about the fact that police officers cannot be knocked out, because their weapon could then be taken. Everyone needs to understand that punching or striking an officer, including by so-called "unarmed" people, is unbelievably dangerous and the police response to it can't always be "de-escalation" and "talking it out". As police continue to work on doing our jobs better and keeping everyone safe, we also need to emphasize that no one gets to attack a police officer - ever. We are very grateful that Spencer is OK, due to his great work and the assistance of a local resident who immediately came in to help. We will be planning to recognize the citizen at a future council meeting.

Finally, the cover story of this month's "NW Lawyer", a publication of the Washington State Bar Association, features [K-9 teams from Kitsap County and Bremerton](#).

Work Hard - Have Fun - Stay Safe

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